



Biden and Trump are making dueling trips to the Mexico border in Texas on Thursday, AP sources say

By SEUNG MIN KIM, COLLEEN LONG, ZEKE MILLER and JILL COLVIN

Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) —

President Joe Biden and former President Donald Trump will make dueling trips to the Mexican border in Texas on Thursday after congressional talks on a deal to rein in illegal migration collapsed. The visits underscore immigration's central importance in the 2024 presidential race and how much both Biden and Trump are seeking to use the nation's broken system to their political advantage.

Biden will travel to Brownsville, Texas, in the Rio Grande Valley, an area that often sees large numbers of border crossings, White House press secretary Karine Jean-Pierre said Monday. He will meet border agents and discuss the need for bipartisan legisla-

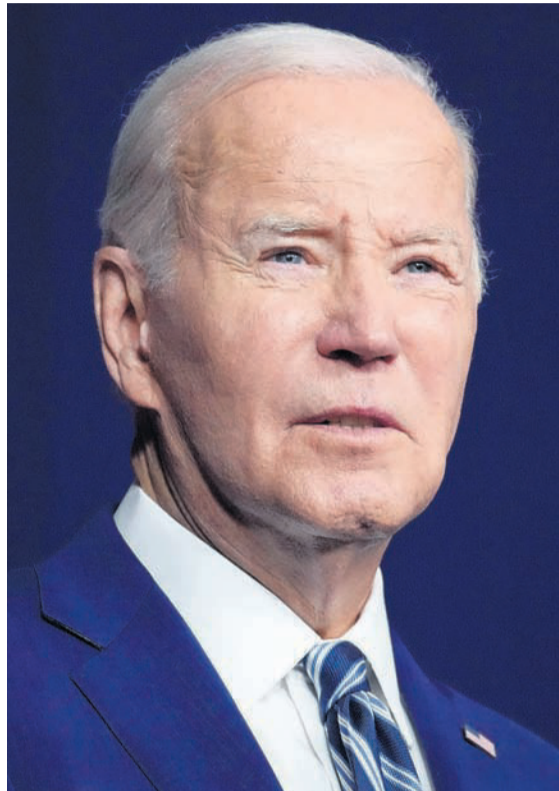
tion. It would be his second visit to the border as president. He traveled to El Paso in January last year.

"He wants to make sure he puts his message out there to the American people," Jean-Pierre said.

Trump, for his part, will head to Eagle Pass, Texas, about 325 miles or 520 kilometers away from Brownsville, another hotspot in the state-federal clash over border security, according to three people who spoke to The Associated Press on condition of anonymity to discuss the plans.

The number of people who are illegally crossing the U.S. border has been rising for complicated reasons that include climate change, war and unrest in other nations, the economy, and cartels that see migration as a cash cow.

The administration has been pairing crackdowns



In this combination of photos, President Joe Biden, left, speaks on Aug. 10, 2023, in Salt Lake City, and former President Donald Trump speaks on June 13, 2023, in Bedminster, N.J.

Associated Press

at the border with increasing legal pathways for migrants designed to steer people into arriving by plane with sponsors, not illegally on foot to the border. But U.S. policy right now allows for migrants to claim asylum regardless of how they arrive. And the numbers of migrants flowing to the U.S.-Mexico border have far outpaced the capacity of an immigration

system that has not been substantially updated in decades. Arrests for illegal crossings fell by half in January, but there were record highs in December.

Biden has excoriated Republicans for abandoning the bipartisan border deal after Trump came out in opposition to the plan to tighten asylum restrictions and create daily limits on border crossings. Trump,

meanwhile, has dialed up his anti-immigrant rhetoric, suggesting migrants are poisoning the blood of Americans.

Trump's campaign says Biden's plan to visit the border is a sign that the president is on the defensive over immigration and the issue is a problem for his reelection effort.

Continued on next page

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Continued from Front

Trump's campaign press secretary, Karoline Leavitt, said Biden was chasing Trump and is responsible for the "worst immigration crisis in history." The White House announcement came after Trump's planned trip had been reported.

Biden's camp says it's House Republicans who are on the defensive, after Trump flatly said he told GOP legislators to tank the bill that would have funded border agents and other Homeland Security authorities. The New York Times first reported the travel.

While he continues to criticize Republicans for legislative inaction, Biden is considering executive actions to help discourage migrants from coming to the U.S. Among the actions under consideration by Biden is invoking authorities outlined in Section 212(f) of the Immigration and Nationality Act, which give a president broad leeway to block entry of certain immigrants into the United States if it would be "detrimental" to the national interest. But without changes to law, any executive action taken by the administration that cracks down on border crossings is likely to



Migrants unload their items off a bus as they arrive at a bus stop after leaving a processing facility, Friday, Feb. 23, 2024, in San Diego.

Associated Press

be challenged in court. The White House has informed some lawmakers on Capitol Hill that Biden will not announce an executive order on immigration during his border trip on Thursday, according to a person familiar with the conversations. "There is no executive action that would have done what the Senate bipartisan proposal would have done," Jean-Pierre said. "Politics got in the way."

According to an AP-NORC poll in January, concerns about immigration climbed to 35% from 27% last year. Most Republicans, 55%, say the government needs to focus on immigration in 2024, while 22% of Democrats listed immigration as a priority. That's up from 45% and 14%, respectively, compared with December 2022. Trump is again making immigration the centerpiece of his campaign, seiz-

ing on images of migrants sleeping in police stations and in hangars as proof that Biden's policies have failed. He's made frequent trips to the border as a candidate and president. During his 2016 campaign, he traveled to Laredo, Texas in July 2015 for a visit that highlighted how his views on immigration helped him win media attention and support from the GOP base. Since leaving office

he's been to the border at least twice, including to pick up the endorsement of Texas Gov. Greg Abbott. Biden, meanwhile, visited the border only once, and he did not come into contact with any migrants. Rather, he inspected Customs and Border Protection facilities and walked a stretch of border wall. During negotiations on the border bill, he suggested he'd shut down asylum if given the power, a remarkable shift to the right for Democrats who are increasingly concerned by the same scenes of migrants encampments, and are asking the administration to speed up work authorizations so families who have arrived can at least seek employment.

The failure of the border bill this month has caused the Homeland Security Department, which controls the border, to assess its priorities and shift money between its agencies to plug holes. U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement is considering slashing detention beds to 22,000 from 38,000 and reducing deportation flights. That would mean more migrants released into the U.S. who arrive at the border. □

Nation's top health official to visit Alabama in wake of IVF ruling



Health and Human Services Secretary Xavier Becerra testifies during a hearing of the Senate Appropriations Committee on Capitol Hill, Nov. 8, 2023, in Washington.

Associated Press

By AMANDA SEITZ

WASHINGTON (AP) — The Biden administration is sending the nation's top health official to Alabama on Tuesday for discussions with patients and doctors about the controversial court ruling that upended in vitro fertilization treatment in the state. The ruling by the Republican-controlled Alabama Supreme Court has unexpectedly propelled the issue of IVF into the presidential campaign conversation right ahead of Super Tuesday voting on March 5. The visit by Health and Human Services Secretary Xavier Becerra comes just days after former President Donald Trump vowed to protect access to the fertility care. President Joe Biden and his allies have been quick to seize on last week's ruling — which says that frozen embryos can be considered children under state law and threatens the future of fertility care in the state — as evidence that Republicans have gone too far with restricting reproductive care. Some Republicans, too, have said

they're alarmed by the ruling. Biden called the ruling "outrageous" in a statement. Vice President Kamala Harris described the decision as the epitome of "irony," since it could impede families' ability to have children. Several clinics have paused IVF treatment since the court's decision came down. Some lawmakers in the state say they're scrambling for a fix. Trump, who appointed anti-abortion judges to the U.S. Supreme Court and in federal judgeships around the country, came out strongly against the ruling on Friday saying on his own social media platform, "We want to make it easier for mothers and fathers to have babies, not harder!" During his visit to Alabama, Becerra will meet with patients and doctors who have been impacted by the state court's ruling. "The decision in Alabama will have heart-wrenching consequences for women & their families," Becerra said in a social media post reacting to the ruling last week. □

Supreme Court wrestles with GOP-led states' efforts to regulate social media platforms

By **MARK SHERMAN**
Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The Supreme Court wrestled Monday with state laws that could affect how Facebook, TikTok, X, YouTube and other social media platforms regulate content posted by their users. The cases are among several this term in which the justices could set standards for free speech in the digital age.

In nearly four hours of arguments, several justices questioned aspects of laws adopted by Republican-dominated legislatures and signed by Republican governors in Florida and Texas in 2021. But they seemed wary of a broad ruling, with Justice Amy Coney Barrett warning of "land mines" she and her colleagues need to avoid in resolving the two cases.

While the details vary, both laws aimed to address conservative complaints that the social media companies were liberal-leaning and censored users based on their viewpoints, especially on the political right. Justices Samuel Alito and



The Guardian of Law sculpture is seen at the west entrance of the Supreme Court on Thursday, Feb. 22, 2024, in Washington.

Clarence Thomas appeared most ready to embrace arguments made by lawyers for the states. Alito complained about the term "content moderation" that the sites employ to keep material off their platforms.

"Is it anything more than a euphemism for censor-

ship?" he asked.

But Justice Brett Kavanaugh, seemingly more favorable to the companies, took issue with applying the term censorship to actions taken by private companies, rather than the government. "When I think of Orwellian, I think of the state, not private individu-

als," Kavanaugh said.

The cases are among several the justices have grappled with over the past year involving social media platforms. Next month, the court will hear an appeal from Louisiana, Missouri and other parties accusing administration officials of pressuring social media

companies to silence conservative points of view. Two more cases awaiting decision concern whether public officials can block critics from commenting on their social media accounts, an issue that previously came up in a case involving then-President Donald Trump.

The court dismissed the Trump case when his presidential term ended in January 2021.

The Florida and Texas laws were passed in the months following decisions by Facebook and Twitter, now X, to cut Trump off over his posts related to the Jan. 6 attack on the U.S. Capitol by his supporters.

Trade associations representing the companies sued in federal court, claiming that the laws violated the platforms' speech rights. One federal appeal struck down Florida's statute, while another upheld the Texas law.

In a statement when he signed the bill into law, Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis said the measure would be "protection against the Silicon Valley elites." □

Associated Press

Manhattan DA asks judge for a gag order in Trump's hush-money case ahead of next month's trial

By **MICHAEL R. SISAK**
Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — Prosecutors in Donald Trump's New York hush-money criminal case asked a judge Monday to impose a gag order on the former president ahead of next month's trial, citing a "long history of making public and inflammatory remarks" about people involved in his legal cases.

The Manhattan district attorney's office asked for what it called a "narrowly tailored" gag order that would bar Trump from making or directing others to make public statements about potential witnesses and jurors, as well as statements meant to interfere with or harass the court's

staff, prosecution team or their families.

"Self-regulation is not a viable alternative, as defendant's recent history makes plain," prosecutors wrote in court papers. Trump, they said, "has a longstanding and perhaps singular history" of using social media, campaign speeches and other public statements to "attack individuals that he considers to be adversaries."

The requested gag order would not ban Trump from commenting about the Manhattan district attorney, Alvin Bragg.

Jury selection in the case is scheduled to begin March 25. Barring a last-minute delay, it will be the first of Trump's four criminal cases

to go to trial.

The judge, Juan Manuel Merchan, didn't immediately rule on the prosecution's gag order request. Trump lawyer Susan Necheles said the defense will respond in court papers later this week.

Steven Cheung, a spokesperson for Trump's presidential campaign, called the request "election interference pure and simple" and called the case a "sham orchestrated by partisan Democrats desperately attempting to prevent" Trump from returning to the White House.

"Today, the 2-tiered system of justice implemented against President Trump is on full display, with the request by another De-

ranged Democrat prosecutor seeking a restrictive gag order, which if granted, would impose an unconstitutional infringement on President Trump's

First Amendment rights, including his ability to defend himself, and the rights of all Americans to hear from President Trump," Cheung said in a statement. □



Former President Donald Trump leaves Manhattan criminal court, Thursday, Feb. 15, 2024, in New York.

Associated Press

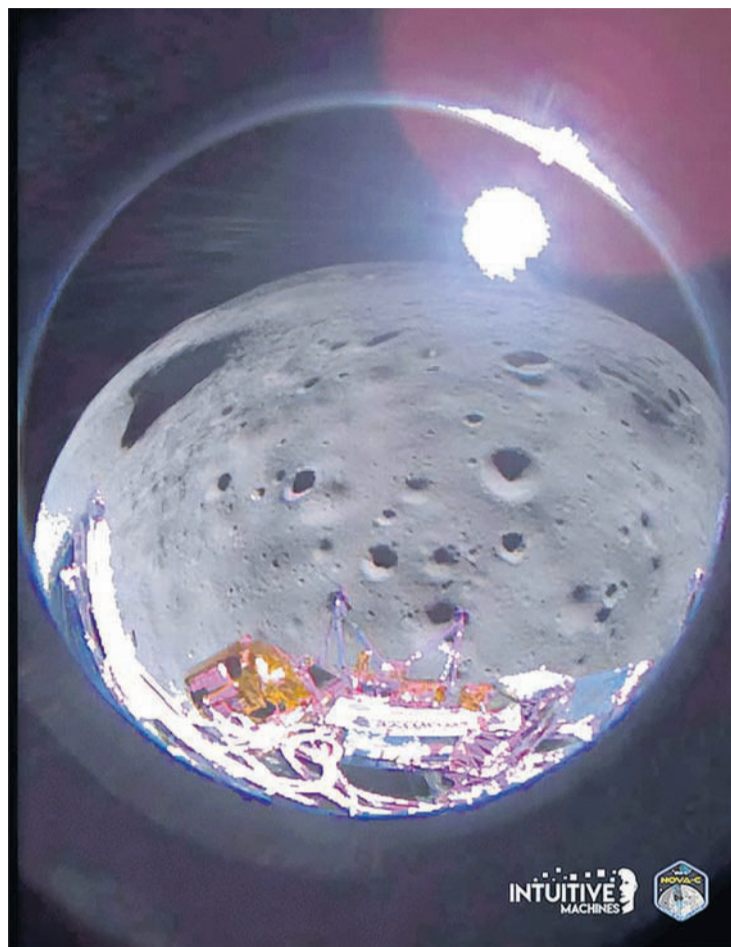
Sideways moon landing cuts mission short, private U.S. lunar lander will stop working Tuesday

By **MARCIA DUNN**
CAPE CANAVERAL, Fla. (AP) — A private U.S. lunar lander is expected to stop working Tuesday, its mission cut short after landing sideways near the south pole of the moon.

Intuitive Machines, the Houston company that built and flew the spacecraft, said Monday it will continue to collect data until sunlight no longer shines on the solar panels. Based on the position of Earth and the moon, officials expect that to happen Tuesday morning. That's two to three days short of the week or so that NASA and other customers had been counting on.

The lander, named *Odysseus*, is the first U.S. spacecraft to land on the moon in more than 50 years, carrying experiments for NASA, the main sponsor. But it came in too fast last Thursday and the foot of one of its six legs caught on the surface, causing it to tumble over, according to company officials.

Based on photos from NASA's Lunar Reconnaissance Orbiter flying overhead, *Odysseus* landed within a mile or so (1.5 ki-



This image provided by Intuitive Machines shows its *Odysseus* lunar lander which captured this image approximately 35 seconds after pitching over during its approach to the landing site.

Associated Press

lometers) of its intended target near the Malapert A crater, just 185 miles or so (300 kilometers) from the moon's south pole.

The LRO photos from 56 miles (90 kilometers) up are the only ones showing the lander on the surface, but as little more than a spot in

the grainy images. A camera-ejecting experiment by Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University, to capture images of the lander as they both descended, was called off shortly before touchdown because of a last-minute navigation issue.

According to NASA, the lander ended up in a small, degraded crater with a 12-degree slope. That's the closest a spacecraft has ever come to the south pole, an area of interest because of suspected frozen water in the permanently shadowed craters there.

NASA, which plans to land astronauts in this region in the next few years, paid Intuitive Machines \$118 million to deliver six experiments to the surface. Other customers also had items on board.

Instead of landing upright, the 14-foot (4.3-meter) *Odysseus* came down on its side, hampering communication with Earth. Some antennas were covered up by the toppled lander, and the ones still exposed ended up near the ground, resulting in spotty communications. The solar panels

also ended up much closer to the surface than anticipated, less than ideal in the hilly terrain. Even under the best of circumstances, *Odysseus* only had a week to operate on the surface before the long lunar night set in.

Since the 1960s, only the U.S., Russia, China, India and Japan have successfully pulled off moon landings, and only the U.S. with crews. Japan's lander ended up on the wrong side, too, just last month.

Despite its slanted landing, Intuitive Machines became the first private business to join the elite group. Another U.S. company, Astrobotic Technology, gave it a try last month, but didn't make it to the moon because of a fuel leak.

Intuitive Machines almost failed, too. Ground teams did not turn on the switch for the lander's navigating lasers before the Feb. 15 liftoff from Florida. The oversight was not discovered until *Odysseus* was circling the moon, forcing flight controllers to rely on a NASA laser-navigating device that was on board merely as an experiment. □

Lack of snow cancels longest sled dog race in eastern United States

By **PATRICK WHITTLE**
Associated Press

PORTLAND, Maine (AP) — The organizers of the longest sled dog race in the eastern United States said Monday they are canceling the event due to a lack of snow on the ground.

The Can-Am Crown International Sled Dog Races have taken place in northern Maine for more than three decades, including a 250-mile event that is the marquee sled dog race in New England. But this year, snowfall has been well below average in Maine, and it's not safe to run the races, organizers said.

A forecasted heavy rainstorm and period of unseasonably warm weather also bode poorly for trail condi-

tions, said Can-Am president Dennis Cyr. "The unique challenges presented by the lack of

snow have led us to conclude that moving forward with this year's race could compromise the well-being

of all involved," Cyr said. "It is a decision made with heavy hearts but necessary caution."

The races are held in Fort Kent, more than 300 miles north of Portland near the border with Canada. The town has had 46.8 inches (119 cm) of snow this year and normally would have had more than 80 inches (203 cm) by now, the National Weather Service said. The races were founded in 1992 and they've had to occasionally reroute over the years because of conditions. The race was halted early in 1994 due to thinning ice and a cold snap on race day resulted in last-minute changes in 2017.

The 2021 races were also canceled due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

The event normally brings thousands of spectators and valuable tourism dollars to one of the most rural parts of the Northeast. It's one of many cold weather events that has been jeopardized in recent years by increasingly warm winter temperatures in northern parts of the country.

The Upper Peninsula Sled Dog Association also decided to cancel sled dog races scheduled for this month in Michigan's Upper Peninsula along the shore of Lake Superior. This month's Pond Hockey Classic in New Hampshire was moved from Lake Winnepesaukee because of a lack of thick ice. □



Patty Richards from Vermont takes off with her team of sled dogs at the start of the Can-Am 100 Saturday, March 5, 2022 in Fort Kent, Maine.

Associated Press

Ukrainian troops pull back again as Russia's onslaught pushes ahead in eastern Ukraine

By ILLIA NOVIKOV
Associated Press

KYIV, Ukraine (AP) — Ukrainian troops have pulled out of a village in the east of the country, an army spokesman said Monday, as Russian forces display advantages in manpower and ammunition on the battlefield at the start of the war's third year.

The latest setback for Kyiv's soldiers was in the village of Lastochkyne, where they fell back to nearby villages in an attempt to hold the line there, Dmytro Lykhovii, a spokesman for one of the Ukrainian troop groupings, said on national television. Lastochkyne lies to the west of Avdiivka, a suburb of Donetsk city that the Kremlin's forces captured on Feb. 18 after a four-month battle. The outnumbered defenders were overwhelmed by Moscow's military might, and Ukraine chose to pull out its troops and mount a defense elsewhere.

Russia's Ministry of Defense said its troops had "liberated" Lastochkyne.

Russian state-owned news agency RIA Novosti quoted local commander Andrei Mordvichev as saying troops had pushed Ukrainian forces back by 10 ki-



This photo taken from video released by the head of the Russian-controlled Donetsk region Denis Pushilin's telegram channel on Saturday, Feb. 24, 2024, shows damaged buildings, after Russian forces completed their takeover of Avdiivka, eastern Ukraine.

lometers (6 miles) and were continuing with their offensive. The agency said a key Ukrainian supply route ran through Lastochkyne.

It was not possible to independently verify each side's claims.

Though not in itself a major loss, abandoning the village illustrates the battlefield challenges Ukraine is currently facing. The new phase of the war has brought some bleak developments for Ukraine.

Moscow's troops are driving on, smashing towns and cities with their superior

firepower, despite suffering high losses of troops and equipment, Ukraine says.

Western analysts say the Russians are attacking in strength along four parallel axes in the northeast, aiming to press deeper into the Ukraine-held western part of the Donetsk region and also penetrating into the Kharkiv region north of it.

Ukrainian Defense Minister Rustan Umerov complained Sunday that half of promised Western military support to Ukraine fails to arrive on time. That, he said, makes it hard to undertake

proper military planning and ultimately costs the lives of soldiers.

Western leaders have sworn to stand by Ukraine as long as they need to defeat Russia's full-scale invasion of Feb. 24 2022, and Bulgarian Prime Minister Nikolay Denkov arrived in Kyiv on Monday to show his support.

More than 20 European heads of state and government and other Western officials were due to meet in Paris on Monday to discuss the war at what French President Emmanuel Ma-

cron called a "critical" juncture. He says Kyiv needs more military resources and likely will require them over an extended period of time.

Addressing the summit via video, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy emphasized the need to increase joint production of weapons and ammunition, improve Ukrainian air defenses and put pressure on Russia via sanctions and confiscation of assets.

"We have to prove that we can deprive Russia of its advantage in the sky, in financing aggression, and in the political sphere. This is the task of the year," Zelenskyy said.

U.S. President Joe Biden was also seeking to remove political roadblocks on providing more aid to Ukraine, convening the top four congressional leaders at the White House on Tuesday.

In other developments, Moscow-installed officials in Ukraine's eastern Donetsk region claimed that Russian troops had destroyed a U.S.-made Abrams tank for the first time since they were deployed in Ukraine last fall, RIA Novosti reported.

U.N.'s secretary general warns the world is becoming 'less safe by the day'

GENEVA (AP) — U.N. Secretary-General Antonio Guterres says combatants in places such as Congo, Gaza, Myanmar, Ukraine and Sudan are turning a "blind eye" to international law as he made a plea for greater respect for human rights and peace around the world.

Speaking as the U.N.'s top human rights body opened its latest session, Guterres warned Monday that the world is becoming "less safe by the day."

"Our world is changing at warp speed," he told the Human Rights Council. "The multiplication of conflicts is causing unprecedented

suffering. But human rights are a constant."

The U.N. chief said attacks on human rights take many forms, and reiterated his frequent calls for debt relief for some of the world's poorest countries and greater spending to fight climate change. He defended UNRWA, the agency for Palestinian refugees, as the "backbone" of aid efforts in Gaza at a time when top Israeli authorities have called for its dismantling.

The U.N. human rights chief, Volker Türk, also lashed out at "attempts to undermine the legitimacy and work" of the U.N. and its affiliates.

"The U.N. has become a lightning rod for manipulative propaganda and a scapegoat for policy failures," he said. "This is profoundly destructive of the common good, and it callously betrays the many people whose lives rely on it."

The council was kicking off a six-week session on Monday as crises of human rights abound.

On many minds will be the death this month of opposition leader Alexei Navalny while held in prison in President Vladimir Putin's Russia, a permanent U.N. Security Council member. □



U.N. Secretary-General Antonio Guterres, left, and U.N. High Commissioner for Human Rights Volker Turk (Tuerk), right, arrive, prior the opening of the High-Level Segment of the 55th session of the Human Rights Council at the European headquarters of the United Nations in Geneva, Switzerland, Monday, Feb. 26, 2024.

Associated Press

Majority of countries argue Israel violated international law in last historic hearing at U.N. court

By **MOLLY QUELL**
Associated Press

THE HAGUE (AP) — The United Nations' highest court on Monday wrapped up historic proceedings into the legality of Israel's 57-year occupation of lands sought by Palestinians for a future state, with most voices at the hearing arguing against the Israeli government.

Over six days, the International Court of Justice heard from an unprecedented number of countries and the majority argued Israel was violating international law and called for the establishment of an independent Palestinian state.

"The real obstacle to peace is obvious the deepening occupation by Israel of the Palestinian territories, including East Jerusalem, and failure to implement the two-state vision, Israel and Palestine living side by side," Turkey's Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs Ahmet Yildiz said.

The hearings addressed a request by the U.N. General Assembly for a non-binding opinion on the legality of Israel's policies. The court says it will issue its opinion in "due course." On average, advisory opinions are released six months after oral



A Palestinian flag flies outside the United Nations' highest court, rear, during historic hearings in The Hague, Netherlands, Wednesday, Feb. 21, 2024, into the legality of Israel's 57-year occupation of the West Bank and east Jerusalem, plunging the 15 international judges back into the heart of the decades-long Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

Associated Press

proceedings.

Fiji was one of a handful of countries to argue that the court should refuse the request and directly mentioned the Hamas attacks that set off the war in Gaza and left about 1,200 people dead while Hamas militants also took nearly 250 others hostage.

"The events of 7 October 2023 have shown us what could happen if there were a complete and unconditional withdrawal without the necessary arrange-

ments in place to guarantee the security of Israel," Filipino Tarakinikini said on behalf of the South Pacific Island nation.

The United States also cautioned the court against issuing an opinion, calling for an immediate withdrawal from the territories. Acting State Department legal adviser Richard Visek said last week the judges should not seek to resolve the decades-long Israeli-Palestinian conflict "through an advisory opinion addressed

to questions focusing on the acts of only one party." Palestinian Foreign Minister Riad Malki had previously urged the 15-judge panel to uphold the Palestinian right to self-determination and to declare "that the Israeli occupation is illegal and must end immediately, totally and unconditionally."

Though the hearings were held against the backdrop of the Israel-Hamas war, which has killed more than 29,000 Palestinians, ac-

cording to Gaza's Health Ministry, it pre-dated this round of conflict and focused instead on Israel's open-ended occupation of the West Bank, the Gaza Strip and east Jerusalem.

Late last month, the court ordered Israel to do all it can to prevent death, destruction and any acts of genocide in its military offensive in Gaza. South Africa also filed a separate case accusing Israel of genocide because of its actions in the Strip, a charge that Israel denied.

Israel rejects accusations that its treatment of Palestinians amounts to apartheid and has accused U.N. bodies and international tribunals of bias.

It did not participate in the oral proceedings but, in a five-page written submission, Israel said the questions put to the court are prejudiced and "fail to recognize Israel's right and duty to protect its citizens." Israel captured the West Bank, east Jerusalem and the Gaza Strip in the 1967 Mideast war.

The Palestinians seek all three areas for an independent state. Israel considers the West Bank to be a disputed territory, whose future should be decided in negotiations. □

U.S. reiterates support for a Haiti deployment as it meets with Caribbean leaders

By **BERT WILKINSON**
Associated Press

GEORGETOWN, Guyana (AP) — The U.S. government on Monday reiterated its support to help restore peace and calm to Haiti, saying it will provide money, equipment and logistical support to a multinational force whose deployment remains uncertain.

Linda Thomas-Greenfield, the U.S. ambassador to the United Nations who is in Guyana for a Caribbean summit this week, said the U.S. is playing its part in rallying global support for a U.N.-backed Kenyan po-

lice force. She noted the U.S. government already



Women and children gather outside a police station after fleeing their homes in Cite Soleil due to gang violence, in Port-au-Prince, Haiti, Monday, Feb. 12, 2024.

Associated Press

tion. "The people, they need 310,000 people have been left homeless as gangs estimated to control up to 80% of the capital of Port-au-Prince keep warring over territory.

Kenya agreed to lead a multinational force to Haiti that was authorized by the U.N. Security Council last October. However, it's unclear when or if a deployment would occur under the current plans. A court in Kenya ruled last month that the deployment is unconstitutional, though the East African nation's government has said it is appealing the ruling

Thomas-Greenfield wel-

comed reports that the West African nation of Benin has offered to send 2,000 troops to join the proposed deployment to Haiti, adding that Caricom leaders stressed the need for more French-speaking forces.

The Bahamas, Belize and Jamaica, which are members of a regional trade bloc known as Caricom, already have offered to send troops and police officers. Meanwhile, the South American country of Guyana, which is hosting the four-day Caricom summit, has promised to donate money to the effort. □

Aruban snacks and where to find them

ORANJESTAD — Want to taste something different for a change? How about some Aruban snacks that you can find all around the island? Hop in your car, and go to these locations to find some of the most popular and tasty snacks that are beloved by our locals.

One of the staples of Aruban cuisine and snacks is the Pastechi. Pastechi is a Caribbean fried pastry that is filled with cheese, meat, chicken, veggies and sometimes even fish! Or perhaps you might want to try a croquette, locally called a "kroket," which is a crusty fried snack with typically a meat and dough mix filling. The Aruban kroket is based on its Dutch counterpart, the "bitterbal".

These two snacks are typically found in all local snack trucks, which can be found all over the island, including on the side of the main road that stretches from San Nicolas to the Hotel Area. You can also find pastechis and krokets at local bakeries and snack shops, like Bright Bakery in Piedra Plat, Huchada in Santa Cruz or Pastechi House in the city center. These places may also sell other snacks and sandwiches too, perfect for on-the-road lunch break. While you're at it, why not

accompany your snack with a refreshing "batido"? Batidos are fruit shakes, typically made with added milk for some creaminess. However, you can also ask to hold the milk. Batidos are commonly found in snack shops too. You may find some batido shops next the flea markets downtown, or if you're on your way to San Nicolas, at Mauchi Smoothies and Juice Bar in Savaneta (located at the side of the main road).

If you are looking for something a bit more fresh and healthy, why not try some coconuts, or shaved ice from local vendors? These vendors carry their little shop at the back of their truck, so they are ever-moving around the island. However, there are a few spots where you can almost always find a coconut/shaved ice vendor:

1. Right next to the Red Anchor in San Nicolas, on the way to Baby Beach.
2. Along the main road next to the airport field.
3. At the California Light House.
4. At the Alto Vista Chapel.

These vendors may also sell other delights, like the beloved coconut-based dessert "cocada" or peanuts.

All in all, in Aruba, you can always find some place to take a break and have

a bite of something local, you maybe just might have to look for them!

Photo credit: wheninaruba.com



Aruba Tourism Authority honors a loyal visitor at the Caribbean Palm Village!

The Aruba Tourism Authority recently had the great pleasure of recognizing an Emerald Ambassador of Aruba. This Ambassador

was respectively honored with a certificate acknowledging his years of visits, loyalty, and love for the island of Aruba.



The honor certification is presented on behalf of the Minister of Tourism as a token of appreciation and to say "Masha Danki" to guests who have visited Aruba 10, 20, or 35 years or more consecutively.

The three honoring levels are as follows:

- | | |
|------------------------|----------------------|
| Distinguished | Visitor |
| (10>years | consecutively |
| visiting Aruba) | |
| Goodwill | Ambassador |
| (20>years | consecutively |
| visiting Aruba) | |
| Emerald | Ambassador |
| (35>years | consecutively |

visiting Aruba)

The honoree was:

Emerald Ambassador

Mr. Walter Johnson from New Jersey, United States.

Ms. Marouska Heyliger representing the Aruba Tourism Authority, and staff members of the Caribbean Palm Village bestowed the honor certification to the honoree, presented him with gifts, and also thanked him for choosing Aruba as his favorite vacation destination, as his home away from home.

Top reasons for returning to Aruba, provided by Mr. Johnson were:

- Aruba's warm and friendly people.
- Aruba's consistent weather.
- Aruba's nice sandy beaches and turquoise waters.
- Aruba's restaurants.
- "I love Aruba."

On behalf of the Aruba Tourism Authority, we would like to express our sincere gratitude and appreciation to the honoree for his continued visits to the "One Happy Island".

LAVA
ARUBA GLASS STUDIO

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Turtle season is about to begin in Aruba!



The nesting season of the Leatherback or "Driekel" Turtle, the largest of the seven species of marine turtles in the world, is set to commence early in the Caribbean this year. Already in America, they have started making their nests and laying eggs; however, this also heavily depends on human behavior.

As is known, several species of marine turtles come to Aruba to lay their eggs. They come during specific seasons, always starting after carnival from March to July. The first to arrive is the Leatherback Sea Turtle, known in Aruba as "Driekel," and later, the Hawksbill Turtle, which can nest until November.

Turtles have been internationally protected since 1990, based on the Cartagena Convention, an international treaty that protects marine life, particularly migratory species (species that move from one country to another).

The greatest dangers to turtles are the developed coastlines because turtles are attracted to artificial light at night. They are animals that come to lay their eggs at night and prefer a dark beach. This becomes a problem that gets increasingly difficult to address every year, not only in Aruba but worldwide.

Another danger turtles

face is from boats and jet skis in the sea. Turtles need to surface to breathe, and during these moments, many of them die due to jet skis and boats passing by without noticing there are turtles nearby.

The nesting season for turtles is from March to July. Female turtles come ashore and look for the most suitable place to lay their eggs. It is crucial for people to know that during this phase, they should not disturb the turtles because they might return to the water without laying their eggs.

The ongoing coastal development due to construction companies is also a danger to turtles because they build hotels or condos with lights on the beach.

Therefore, if you happen to see a turtle near the beach at night, it's important not to shine lights on them, not to take flash photos, and to contact the relevant authorities, in this case, TurtugAruba.



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Joyce Lonati celebrated her 90th birthday by visiting Aruba!



This year, Joyce Lonati is celebrating a very special birthday, she's turning 90! To mark this wonderful occasion, she brought her three daughters and one son to the place she loves visiting every year: Aruba!

We met Joyce, together with her two daughters Jeanne and Karen, at their favorite hotel, Aruba Beach Club to find out why Joyce decided to celebrate this momentous milestone here

on the island. She told us she has been coming to Aruba every year – with the exception of the lockdown years – for the past 38th years. She is an honorary local, knowledgeable of Aruba's best spots and has the most important tips for having a good time here. In the almost four decades she has been visiting, she has also been an ambassador for Aruba, spreading the word about the friendly people, great beaches, and the most breath-taking sunsets.

Joyce came this year with her three daughters – Karen, Jeanne and Jill, and her son Stephen for a special family trip to celebrate. Each of them comes from different places in the US,

namely North Carolina, Rhode Island and Massachusetts. It wasn't the first time for any of them. As Karen and Jeanne told us, Joyce had already invited them to Aruba in the past, and the family has been coming to the island regularly. Among their favorite activities, they like lounging by the pool, visiting various restaurants and sometimes they enjoy catching a cruise together as well.

In the 38 years that Joyce has visited, she has seen some changes to the island. For example, she still remembers when the Aruba Airport was so small; you got off the plane directly on the tarmac. She also remembers when there used to be a lot more

goats and donkeys roaming all around. Nowadays you can mostly find donkeys near the Red Anchor or at the Donkey Sanctuary, and goats are now mostly owned by a farmer or sometimes can be found wandering the Arikok National Park.

We asked Joyce why she keeps choosing Aruba every year. She says she loves the food – namely the fresh fish! – the friendly people, and all the nature-related activities like tours and going on boats like a sunset tour. She is also a big fan of the iguanas! Thank you Joyce and Lonati family for loving Aruba, and we hope to keep welcoming you back every year. Happy birthday Joyce!

Got plans for this weekend? Try visiting the farmer's markets at Santa Rosa and STR FARM Aruba!

(Oranjestad)—If you're looking for some fresh and local produce, visit the farmer's markets at Santa Rosa and STR FARM Aruba this upcoming Saturday for a nice selection of fruits, veggies, local honey, and other fresh and locally produced goods!

After their successful first pop-up market last year, The Department of Agriculture, or commonly known here as Santa Rosa, is organizing another Pop-Up Market/Farmer's Market at their headquarters at Piedra Plat 114A this Saturday starting from 8am to 11am. Santa Rosa is known for promoting and teaching about farming on the island, and so it's where local farmers and cattlemen go to offer the community some of their home-grown produce. At this market you may find a few stands that sell lo-

cally-grown (micro) greens, as well as different fruits and veggies, fresh beef, eggs and even local honey.

Similarly, STR FARM Aruba, located in Alto Vista 18F, offers a wide range of fruits and veggies, as well as honey, eggs and herbs. You may even find homemade kimchi and local coffee!

Agriculture is a huge part of the Aruban identity, as the island has a rich history of being built by local farmers and cattlemen back in the old days. This is why these local farmer's markets are essential in maintaining the tradition of the "cunucero*" and to further promote the beauty and love that goes into farming and cultivation of home-grown food.

* "Farmer" in Papiamentu.



Ayo & Casibari: Aruba's famous rock formations



The Ayo Rock Formation



The Casibari Rock Formation

(Oranjestad)—The Ayo and Casibari Rock Formations are known locally as one of the crucial sites to have in your “off-road” trip itinerary. These naturally formed rock formations as just one of the few places on the island that hold a rich history of our culture and of our ancestors.

Ayo

The Ayo Rock Formation is located in the northern part of the island, right on the road that leads you to the Black Stone Beach, and close to the Natural Bridge. The Ayo is a fenced terrain that consists of several giant boulders, resting neatly on top of or side by side each other, adding gorgeous natural architecture to the surrounding “mondi”*. This is also one of the few sites to contain prehistoric markings of our indigenous ancestors. The Ayo Rock formation contains stairs that lead you to the top of the highest boulder, offering a breath-taking view of the Aruban backyard. The Ayo is usually quiet, as it is situated farther away from the busier parts of the island. However, this is just another charm of the site: the quiet area and the refreshing breeze offer a sense of comfort and peace.

Casibari

Probably the busier rock formation site, the Casibari is situated more in the center of the island, much closer—and more accessible—to the general public. Just like Ayo, Casibari is a fenced area containing several boulders that lay on top or lean on each other. The best aspect of the Casibari Rock Formation is the accompanying view when you climb up the top of the round, flat bolder. For this position, you can see the majority of the island and the ocean in the south. Right in front of the entrance, there is the Casibari Café and Grill, a great place to get refreshments and snack before continuing your off-road adventure!

Both sites are open free to the public, 24 hours a day. However, unless you are taking a trip with a professional tour guide, there are no guides at the sites to help you climb the rock. So, do be careful when trudging on the boulders, and make sure to befriend any roaming goats you see along the way!

***Mondi: what we call our Aruban wilderness. We don't have forests, or deserts, but we do have mondi!**

Aruba Tourism Authority honors loyal visitors at the Bucuti and Tara Beach Resort!

The Aruba Tourism Authority recently had the great pleasure of recognizing Distinguished Visitors of Aruba. These Ambassadors were respectively honored with a certificate acknowledging their years of visits,

loyalty, and love for the island of Aruba.

The honor certification is presented on behalf of the Minister of Tourism as a token of appreciation and to say “Masha Danki” to guests who have visited Aruba 10, 20, or 35 years or more consecutively.

The three honoring levels are as follows:

- Distinguished Visitor (10>years consecutively visiting Aruba)**
- Goodwill Ambassador (20>years consecutively visiting Aruba)**

Emerald Ambassador (35>years consecutively visiting Aruba)

The honorees were:

Distinguished Visitors

Mr. Tony Fisher & Mrs. Susan Fisher from North Carolina, United States.

Ms. Kimberly Richardson representing the Aruba Tourism Authority, and staff members of the Bucuti and Tara Beach Resort bestowed the honor certification to the honorees, presented them with gifts, and thanked them for choosing Aruba as their favorite va-

cation destination, as their home away from home.

Top reasons for returning to Aruba, provided by the honorees were:

- Aruba's people.
- Aruba's beaches and turquoise waters.
- Aruba's weather and constant breeze.
- Aruba's restaurants.
- “Ease of travel.”

On behalf of the Aruba Tourism Authority, we would like to express our sincere gratitude and appreciation to the honorees for their continued visits to the “One Happy Island”.



National Park Arikok: Aruba's biggest nature conservation

The National Park Arikok comprises almost 18 % of the island. Its rugged terrain, desert-like hills filled with tall cacti, breathtaking coastline and protected local flora and fauna welcome you to be explored. There are numerous animals to discover, for example the sea turtle who lays his eggs on the park's beaches.

The national park Arikok takes you on a memorable journey of the islands past offering unique geological, cultural and historical sites. These can all be enjoyed and explored either on your own or during guided tours. A wide variety of educational and informative programs and fun activities is available.

Did you know that four of the in total seven species of sea turtle lay their eggs on Aruba's beaches? In the national park, a Least Tern (*Sterna antillarum*) keeps a strict eye on a very special event taking place below on the beach: a majestic Leatherback (*Dermochelys coriacea*) heads back to sea after laying her eggs, while another nest laid 2 months ago by the same female hatches—a very rare occurrence of daytime nesting and hatching. Sea turtles prefer nesting in the cool and dark hours of the night. And hatchlings usually wait for the cue of cooling surface sand before emerging.

Nature Conservation

The protected area of National Park Arikok was officially established in 2000. Arikok National Park is a 34 square kilometers (7907 acres) of natural area, located at the north-eastern part of Aruba which contains examples of most of the island's flora and fauna against a backdrop of great geological complexity. We are proud to state that approximately 18% of the total land area of Aruba is assigned as a National Park, to protect and preserve the flora, fauna, geology and historical remains present within Arikok National Park.

The Landscape

There is a great geological variety within the park. The main aspects are the rough hills of the volcanic Aruba lava formation, the mysterious rocks of the batholithic quartz-diorite/tonalite, and the limestone rocks from fossilized coral. The two tallest hills on the island are situated within the park. Jamanota hill 188 meters (617 ft) and Arikok hill 176 meters (577 ft), from which the name of the park is derived.

The line of the permanently wind-and-wave beaten North Coast is broken by several bays (boca's). Most of them are small yet impressive inlets at the mouth of dry riverbeds. Some of these bays (boca's) are spectacular sights, adorned with white, sandy



beaches and sand dunes, as is the case at Boca Prins and Dos Playa.

Arikok is also home to Conchi, Aruba's most important natural attraction; also known as The Natural Pool. The journey to the Pool is and adventure by itself and only possible by foot, horse, ATV or 4x4 vehicle.

Cultural and Historical components

There are a number of sites within the park that attest to the history of Aruba. The Caquetío Indians left rock paintings in Cunucu Arikok and Fontein Cave. The bird drawing in the park logo is a copy of one of these historical artistic expressions.

Old plantation (Cunucus) sites tell the story of an active yet challenging agricultural past.

These Cunucus were also residential areas for the few families that worked the land. These families found ways to survive in the difficult conditions, and were able to erect their homes with materials found in the area. Two of these adobe houses have been restored. Park rangers are learning many of the old building techniques in order to preserve this unique Aruban mud-house. At Cunucu Arikok and near Plantation Prins you can find these adobe houses.

Park Management

For the management of the park, a dedicated foundation "Fundacion Parke Nacional Arikok" (FPNA), known today as the Aruba National Park Foundation was established in July 2003. In February 2017, mangrove and wetland RAMSAR site #198 Spanish Lagoon was annexed to Arikok National Park due to its importance as a feeding and breeding area for water birds and as a nursery area for a variety of marine organisms. With this addition, the areas under FPNA management increased by 70 hectares while the amount of species of flora and fauna to be conserved to over 250. On December 21st, 2018 (AB 2018 no. 77) Parke Marino Aruba – currently consisting of four marine protected areas (MPAs) – was officially established and subsequently brought under management of FPNA. In 2019 management plans will be established for the new MPAs which include: coral reefs, sea grass beds, mangrove systems, a large diversity of breeding seabirds. Parke Marino Aruba also contains potential shark nursery areas, endangered sea turtle nesting beaches and marine mammal nursery areas. □



CROSSWORD

By THOMAS JOSEPH

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1 Shocked wheel
sound
5 Small coin
porch

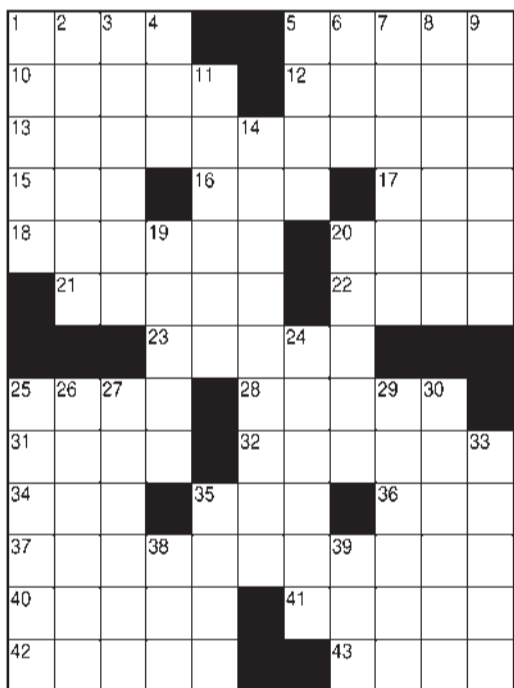
DOWN
1 Roof
13 Harrison feature
15 Cariou of "Blue Bloods"

16 Failure
17 Long time
18 High regard
20 Heaps
21 Writer Anne
22 Easter lead-in
23 Entertain
25 Rotisserie part
28 Hospital worker
31 Sharpen
32 Numskull
34 Vacuum's lack
35 Filming site
36 Hoopla
37 Campaign leader
40 Marisa of "My Cousin Vinny"
41 Docking spots



Yesterday's answer

11 Trade in
14 Reve-
nuer's
target
19 Brighten
20 Wide
awake
24 Prepare
to play
25 Mine
passages
26 Christie
sleuth
27 "When —,
do as ..."
29 River of
song
30 Some
ducks
33 Trunk
35 Mix
38 Maiden
name
39 Tiny
taste



2-27

A XYDLBAAXR
is LONGFELLOW

One letter stands for another. In this sample, A is used for the three L's, X for the two O's, etc. Single letters, apostrophes, the length and formation of the words are all hints. Each day the code letters are different.

2-27

CRYPTOQUOTE

STBQ OTD PZRB TYRB YII

STZEPM; STBQ OTD OZSTTDIF

TYRB EDSTZEP. — ZEFZYE

MYQZEP

Yesterday's Cryptoquote: I ALWAYS PREFER TO BELIEVE THE BEST OF EVERYBODY; IT SAVES SO MUCH TROUBLE. — RUDYARD KIPLING

Global economy is weighed down by war, uncertainty and instability, trade chief warns

By JON GAMBRELL
Associated Press
ABU DHABI, United Arab Emirates (AP) — The head of the World Trade Organization warned on Monday that war, uncertainty and instability are weighing down the global economy and urged the bloc to embrace reform as elections across nearly half the world's population could bring new challenges. WTO Director-General Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala sought to offer some praise for her organization as it

held its binneal meeting in the United Arab Emirates, even as it faces pressure from the United States and other nations. But she was blunt about the risks ahead, as higher prices for food, energy and other essentials sting people's pockets, "fueling political frustration." "People everywhere are feeling anxious about the future and this will be felt at the ballot box this year," she said. None are perhaps more critical for the WTO than the U.S. presidential

election on Nov. 5. Running again is former President Donald Trump, who threatened to withdraw the U.S. from the WTO and repeatedly levied tariffs taxes on imported goods on perceived friends and foes alike. A Trump win could again roil global trade. Okonjo-Iweala did not mention Trump by name, but offered a warning about attacks against multilateralism. "The multilateral trading system, which I term a global public good since it was created 75 years ago, continues to be misconstrued some quarters and undermined," she said. But even if President Joe Biden is re-elected, the United States has deep reservations over the WTO. □

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'Burn Book' torches tech titans in veteran reporter's tale of love and loathing in Silicon Valley

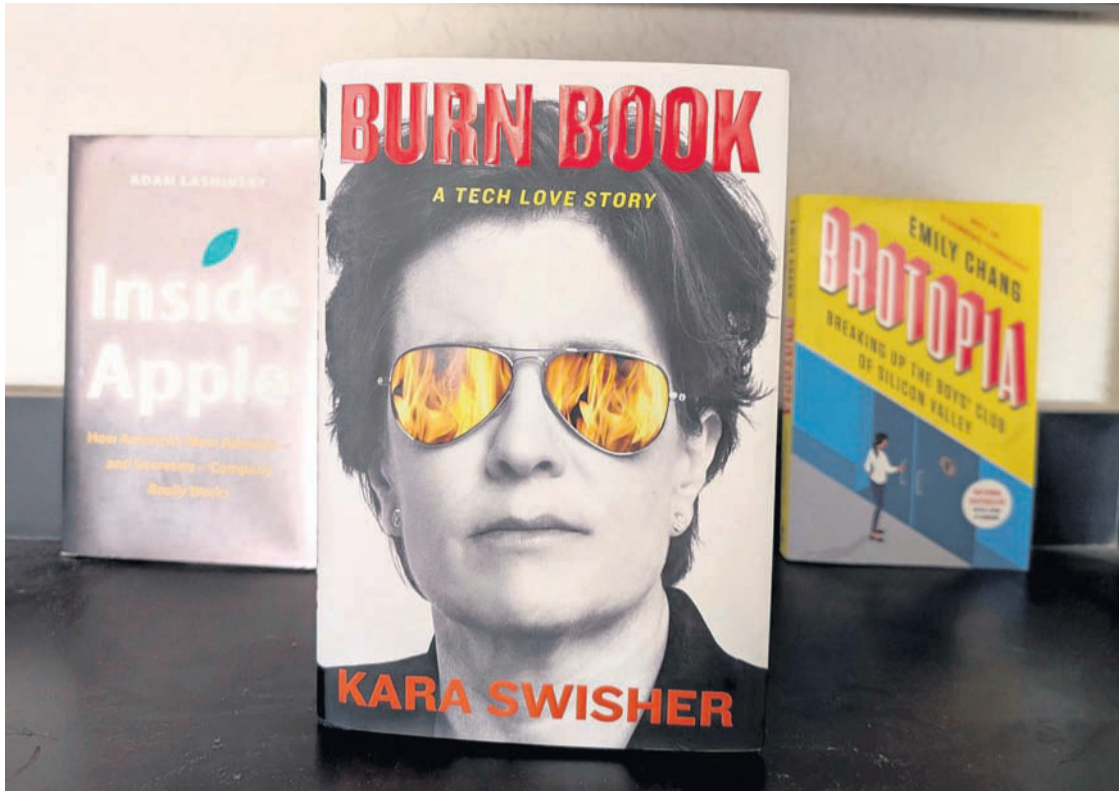
By **MICHAEL LIEDTKE**
AP Technology Writer

Technology is so pervasive and invasive that it's polarizing people, producing feelings of love and loathing for its devices, online services and the would-be visionaries behind them, according to a longtime Silicon Valley reporter.

Kara Swisher unwraps how we got to this point in her incendiary memoir, "Burn Book," coming out Tuesday, an exposé that also seeks to avert technological calamity on the perilous road still ahead.

Swisher skewers many of the once-idealistic tech moguls who, when she met them as entrepreneurs decades ago, promised to change the world for the better but often chose a path of destructive disruption instead. And along the way, they amassed staggering fortunes that have disconnected them from reality.

Facebook founder Mark Zuckerberg, who broke into a sweat during an on-stage interview with Swisher in 2010, and Tesla CEO Elon Musk, who once talked to her regularly before cutting



"Burn Book," by longtime Silicon Valley reporter Kara Swisher is seen, Friday, Feb. 23, 2024, in San Ramon, Calif. The book is published by Simon and Schuster.

off communications after he bought Twitter in 2022, are painted in the harshest light.

"If Mark Zuckerberg is the most damaging man in tech to me, Musk was the most disappointing," Swisher writes in her 300-page book.

That's one of the milder

critiques in what's a mostly scathing takedown by one of the most respected and feared reporters covering technology. Her reputation is such that Swisher has become as synonymous with Silicon Valley as the famous entrepreneurs who shaped it since she began covering the industry in the 1990s.

CEOs, including Zuckerberg and Musk, regularly granted her exclusive interviews, fed her scoops and sometimes even secretly called her for advice, according to her book. When the HBO series, "Silicon Valley," needed someone to play an influential reporter in an episode, Swisher was

cast as herself a role she still regularly fills as a technology commentator on major TV networks.

Swisher no longer resides in Silicon Valley. She moved to Washington, D.C., a few years ago, mostly because that's where her wife works, but also because she was feeling a need to escape what had become an increasingly toxic and insular scene.

But she has remained plugged into and worried about what is happening with technology, particularly with the accelerating rise of artificial intelligence and its potential for causing even more damage than she thinks has already been done by social media, smartphones and other products that haven't been tightly regulated.

Swisher told The Associated Press that she hopes "Burn Book" serves as shot across the bow of both the technology industry and governments around the world, a warning that the same missteps that happened during the past 20 years must not be repeated as artificial intelligence seeps into all corners of society. □

Associated Press

Musicians' muse Pattie Boyd auctions love letters from Eric Clapton and George Harrison

LONDON (AP) — Love letters to Pattie Boyd from both George Harrison and Eric Clapton are going up for sale at Christie's auction

house, alongside clothing, jewelry and other memorabilia from the renowned model and musicians' muse. Boyd, who was previ-



Pattie Boyd, model, writer, photographer and the former wife of musicians George Harrison and Eric Clapton, is seen before speaking at the Fox Theatre on Tuesday, April 19, 2016, in Atlanta.

Associated Press

ously married both to Beatie Harrison and to guitar legend Clapton, is selling a trove of items from her time at the epicenter of the 1960s and 70s counterculture, Christie's announced Monday. For Boyd, Harrison wrote "Something," one of the Fab Four's most-covered tunes. Clapton's passion for his friend's wife inspired the scorching "Layla." Later, when Boyd had left Harrison and married Clapton, he serenaded her with "Wonderful Tonight." The auction includes two love letters from Clapton, written while Boyd was married to Harrison, and the original cover artwork for Derek and The Dominos' 1970 album "Layla

and Other Assorted Love Songs," a painting of a blonde model who reminded Clapton of Boyd. It's estimated to sell for between 40,000 and 60,000 pounds (\$51,000 and \$76,000).

There are also letters and notes from Harrison, and his handwritten lyrics for the song "Mystical One," which have an estimated price of 30,000 to 50,000 pounds (\$38,000 to \$63,000).

Christie's head of sale Adrian Hume-Sayer said Boyd's life and career "chart some of the key moments of the cultural revolution that changed the world in the 1960s," and the auction offered collectors and fans "an unparalleled chance to see and own a piece of

cultural history."

The more than 100 lots include photos taken by Boyd, who became an accomplished photographer, among them images of The Beatles' 1968 stay at Maharishi Mahesh Yogi's ashram in India.

"I'm happy to let go of these things which I have treasured and loved for so many years," said Boyd, 79. "These items represent special moments in my life but now I think it's time to move on and share what I have with others."

The items are open for online bidding between March 8 and 22, and will be on display at Christie's London headquarters from March 15 to 21. □

Maple Leafs scoring marvel Auston Matthews on pace to become rare member of 70-goal club

By MARK ANDERSON and PAT GRAHAM
AP Sports Writers

The offensive artistry of Auston Matthews has reached the point where even hyperbole seems almost plausible.

"Everything he's shooting," Colorado coach Jared Bednar said recently, "is going in the net."

It sure does feel that way. With 52 tallies through 56 games, the Toronto Maple Leafs' goal-scoring marvel is on pace to become a rare member of the 70-goal club, joining the ranks of hockey royalty such as Wayne Gretzky and Mario Lemieux. Last week at Arizona, where he grew up, Matthews set a record for the fastest U.S.-born player to reach 50 goals in a season (54 games).

"He continues to find body position in the open ice and his timing that way is really elite and something that goes unnoticed," Maple Leafs center John Tavares said. "But his ability to find open space and continue to do it night after night is really impressive."

No one is near Matthews' 52 goals, with the closest challenger through Sun-



Toronto Maple Leafs center Auston Matthews (34) carries the puck in front of Arizona Coyotes defenseman Michael Kesselring during the second period of an NHL hockey game Wednesday, Feb. 21, 2024, in Tempe, Ariz.

day being Florida's Sam Reinhart (39). The 26-year-old Matthews has 10 goals and 14 points in the past six games, including a pair of hat tricks.

At this rate, his career high of 60 goals, set two seasons ago, is sure to be surpassed. No active player has reached that mark twice. Accomplish that and the player who's earned the

nicknames of "Big Cactus" (you know, being from Arizona) and "Papi" (a nod to his favorite baseball player, David Ortiz) would put himself in select company.

He would become the ninth player to accomplish that double and the first since Pavel Bure scored 60 goals in the 1992-93 and 1993-94 seasons.

It would understandable

if Toronto coach Sheldon Keefe took his star player's unique skillset almost for granted. But he doesn't.

"We're very fortunate to have a player of that caliber on our team," Keefe said of the No. 1 overall pick in 2016. "Auston leads the way for us in ways that we know and are obvious and show up on the score sheet, but he also leads the

way in so many other categories that help set the standard for our team."

A sentiment shared by Toronto forward Max Domi.

"He's so hungry every time he steps on the ice," Domi said. "He's one of the best if not the best player in the world right now. He's driving the bus right now. Fifty-two goals in however many games he's played is insane, absolutely ridiculous."

Matthews is in the running to win his second Hart Trophy in three years. According to FanDuel Sportsbook, his odds are currently second-best behind only Colorado's Nathan MacKinnon and just ahead of Tampa Bay's Nikita Kucherov.

Matthews isn't just an offensive force, blocking 63 shots this season and generating 60 takeaways both among the league leaders for forwards. He is making a compelling case for the Selke Trophy, too, which is given to the top defensive forward. The only player to be presented both awards in the same season was Sergei Fedorov of the Detroit Red Wings in 1993-94.

"The guy's stick is unbelievable. He's super responsible defensively, going back for pucks," Maple Leafs defenseman Jake McCabe said. "He plays a complete, 200-foot game. I think that definitely gets overshadowed with the goal scoring."

Matthews' play has helped the Maple Leafs reel off seven wins in a row, their longest streak since 2003. It's putting them in the conversation as a possible Stanley Cup threat, which the Leafs infamously haven't won since 1967.

Toronto finally made it to the second round in the last postseason after going one-and-out six years in a row.

"Everyone is just buying in," forward Tyler Bertuzzi said of Toronto's winning ways that's seen them climb to third in the Atlantic Division behind Boston and Florida.

□

Sho-time! Dodgers say Shohei Ohtani will make his spring training debut Tuesday against White Sox



Los Angeles Dodgers designated hitter Shohei Ohtani participates in spring training baseball workouts at Camelback Ranch in Los Angeles, Sunday, Feb. 25, 2024.

Associated Press

GLENDALE, Ariz. (AP) — Spring training Sho-time starts Tuesday with the Los Angeles Dodgers. Shohei Ohtani will make his exhibition debut with the Dodgers when he serves as the designated hitter for Los Angeles on Tuesday against the Chicago White Sox. Los Angeles has been taking it slowly with the two-way star, who signed a record \$700 million, 10-year contract during the offseason. The two-time MVP is coming off right elbow surgery last September that will keep him from pitching this year.

Ohtani did take live batting practice on Sunday,

with Dodgers manager Dave Roberts saying the sport's biggest star looked "good" and will play his first exhibition game Tuesday.

The 29-year-old Ohtani is further along in his recovery than Los Angeles anticipated, and the team hopes he will be available when the Dodgers and the San Diego Padres play a two-game series in Seoul, South Korea, on March 20 and 21.

"Most importantly is his health," Roberts told reporters. "So if it lines up, great. And if it doesn't, then we'll still move on from there." □

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Daniel Suarez edges Blaney, Busch in thrilling 3-wide finish to claim Cup Series win at Atlanta

By **CHARLES ODUM**
AP Sports Writer

HAMPTON, Ga. (AP) — Daniel Suarez hoped but wasn't certain he was the winner after the closest finish ever at Atlanta Motor Speedway.

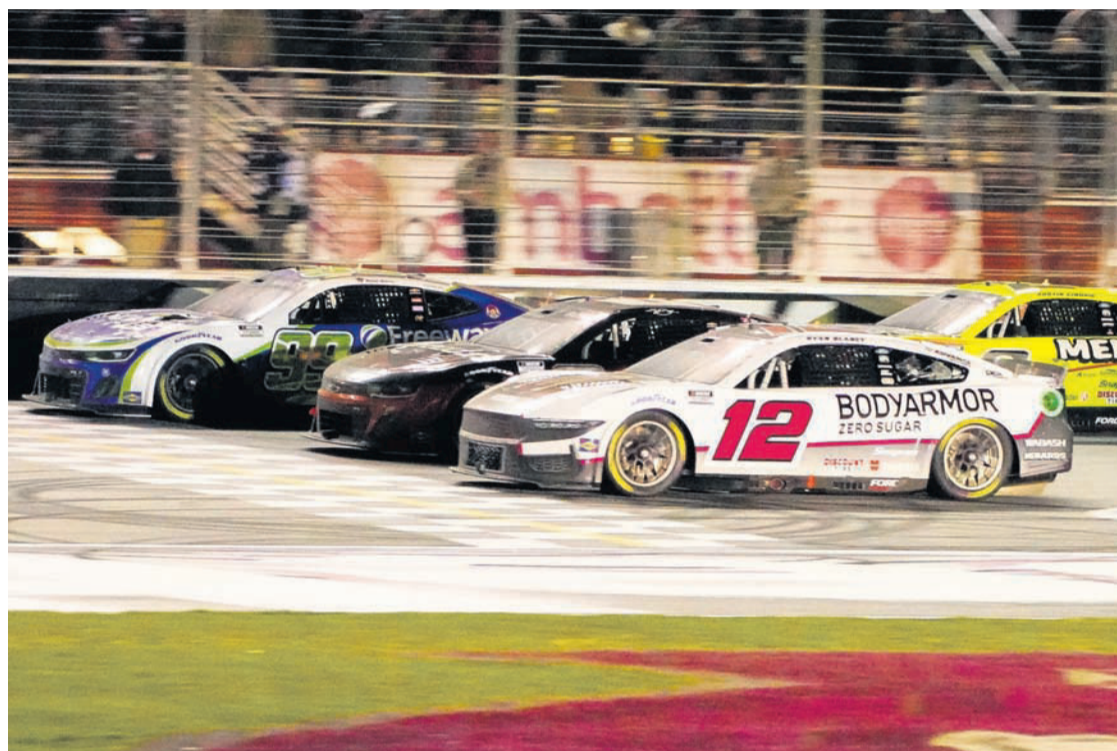
Then came the photo evidence: Suarez edged Ryan Blaney and Kyle Busch in a three-wide blur at the line to win a crashed-filled NASCAR Cup Series race on Sunday.

The second career win in 253 Cup races for Suarez set off a celebration that included a long series of congratulations from other drivers for the popular native of Monterrey, Mexico.

"It was a very special moment," said Suarez, who entered this contract year with his future seemingly uncertain with Trackhouse Racing.

"I was just hoping. I saw the tower and thought I was first. I thought I had it but then they said there was a review."

The review confirmed the first win for Suarez since June 2022 at Sonoma. It



Daniel Suarez (99), left, edges out Kyle Busch (8), center, and Ryan Blaney (12) at the finish line to win during the NASCAR auto race at Atlanta Motor Speedway Sunday, Feb. 25, 2024, in Hampton, Ga.

Associated Press

was his first victory on a speedway, but he said he's not satisfied after locking up a spot in the playoffs in only the second race of the year.

"Some people actually told me you can relax, now you're in the playoffs," Su-

arez said. "Hell no! My goal is to win more than one race.

This is not relaxing here. ... The goal is for you to not be surprised when the 99 is in victory lane."

Busch, who won Saturday's Trucks race, moved to the

middle between Blaney, the 2023 Cup champion, and Suarez to set up the dramatic finish. Blaney was second, only 0.003 seconds behind, and Busch was third.

"It was fun racing, but just a couple inches short,"

Blaney said.

"I'm happy for Daniel, though. That was fun racing him and Kyle. That was fun."

Suarez gave credit to Busch, another Chevrolet driver, for providing a late push.

"It's good to see Daniel get a win," Busch said. "We were helping each other being Chevy team partners and working together there. Shows that when you do have friends and you can make alliances that they do seem to work, and that was a good part of today."

A massive pileup of at least 16 cars on the second lap was the biggest in the history of Atlanta Motor Speedway and set the pace for a procession of wrecks. The crash left many cars heavily taped for the remainder of the afternoon.

The intensity picked up when Austin Cindric went to the bottom of the track in his Team Penske Ford for a four-wide pass to take the lead with 50 laps remaining. □

Paavo Nurmi's five Olympic running golds will be displayed in Paris next month



Paavo Nurmi, of Finland, leads the field during a track at the 1924 Olympics in Paris on July 1924.

Associated Press

MONACO (AP) — The five Olympic gold medals won by Finnish running great Paavo Nurmi will return to Paris and be on display next month to mark a century since his unique achievement at the 1924 Paris Games.

To mark the upcoming Paris Games, the medals will be exhibited from March 27-Sept. 22 at the Monnaie de Paris on the left bank of the river Seine. They will form

part of a larger exhibition of Olympic medals called "D'or, d'argent, de bronze" (Of gold, silver and bronze) organized by the museum of the French mint. Nicknamed "The Flying Finn," Nurmi was one of the first superstars of sport. His five medals are the most athletics golds won at a single Games.

"As famous as the Hollywood stars of his day, lauded by U.S. presidents, Nur-

mi was the first truly global sports star," World Athletics president Sebastian Coe said on Monday.

World Athletics said Nurmi's grandson Mika Nurmi and Finland four-time Olympic champion Lasse Viren a long-distance running great himself will be guests at the March 27 ceremony. The Paris Games in July are followed by the Paralympics in August. □